

A NOTE ON NICETAS DAVID PAPHLAGO AND THE *VITA IGNATII*

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NICETAS David of Paphlagonia is a literary Proteus. He was a prolific author, chiefly of *encomia*, on apostles, saints, or martyrs, which won him wide and lasting popularity.¹ His basic name, Nicetas Paphlago, or Nicetas of Paphlagonia, receives many accretions in innumerable MSS. He is called "Nicetas who is also David": the "rhetor"; the "philosopher"; the "slave of Jesus Christ"; the "holy man"; the "bishop of Dadybra." These titles occur in various combinations. As regards the date of his works, Vogt² states that they are from the time of "Constantine VII, the two Romanuses and up to that of Nicephorus Phocas," i.e., between 913 and 963. If this is right, the encomiast's *floruit* is the first half of the tenth century.

The celebrated *Life of the Patriarch Ignatius*³ (hereafter referred to as VI) is also stated to have been written by "Nicetas, slave of Jesus Christ, also called David, the Paphlagonian." In this superscription we have no fewer than four of the names or titles applied elsewhere to the encomiast. Lastly, the *Life of St. Euthymius*⁴ (hereafter referred to as VE), in chapter sixteen, mentions a certain Nicetas, nephew to Paul the Sacellarius, himself of Paphlagonian origin. This Nicetas, says VE, was a kind of infant prodigy, far the best student of

¹ For a catalogue of his works, with titles, see Chr. M. Loparev, *Izvestija russk. arkheolog. inst. v K/pole*, 13 (1908), pp. 173–181; though Loparev warns us (*Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 19 [1912], p. 148, note 1) that it is perhaps incomplete, and Vogt (*Orientalia Christiana*, 23 [1931], p. 6, note 1) calls it "assez discutable."

² A. Vogt, "Deux discours inédits de Nicétas de Paphlagonie," *Orientalia Christiana*, 23 (1931), p. 6. He promised to produce his evidence in *Corpus Bruxellense*, but, so far as I know, did not do so.

³ MPG, CV, cols. 487–573.

⁴ Ed. by C. De Boor (Berlin, 1888); ed. by P. Karlin-Hayter (*Byzantion*, 25–7 [1955–7], pp. 1–172).

his day, and (by 907) setting up for a teacher. However, in this year, 907, he "despised all the things of this world," divided his substance among the poor and his students, and retired to meditate in a cave on the Black Sea, at Media, near the Bulgarian frontier. He came under suspicion as a potential defector to Bulgaria, was arrested by the military governor of the province of Thrace, and sent back to Constantinople. Here it was found that he had written a "very hostile and bitter" libel (*σύγγραμμα*) against the new patriarch Euthymius (907–912) and against the Emperor Leo VI himself. The poor man was now in considerable danger, until the saintly Euthymius contrived to get him released, despite the remonstrances of Nicetas' own uncle, Paul, and of his own master, Arethas, Archbishop of Caesarea. Nicetas took refuge in the monastery of Agathos, a dependency in Asia of Euthymius' own monastery of Psamathia, in Constantinople. And there he stayed, during two years (908–910), *incommunicado*.

Thus, we have three notices, or bodies of evidence, about a person or persons called Nicetas Paphlago: 1. He was a popular encomiast of the first half of the tenth century, a monk (that is the explanation of his other name "David"), a "rhetor," a "philosopher," and a bishop of Dadybra. 2. He wrote the *Life of St. Ignatius* (died 877). 3. He was a pupil of Arethas of Caesarea (ca. 850–932), and was, in 907 or 908, accused of libelling the Patriarch Euthymius and the Emperor Leo VI. Does this evidence relate to the same person, or to two different persons, or to three different persons?

At first sight, there is no apparent reason for dividing the persons. All of them flourished, or could easily have flourished, in the first half of the tenth century. All are called Nicetas, of Paphlagonian origin. All are writers. 2. and 3. wrote "libels," 2. on Photius and 3. on Euthymius and the

Emperor Leo. 1. and 2. had the same monastic name, David; and 3. may very well have assumed this name on entering the monastery of Agathos in 908. However, since De Boor's celebrated edition and commentary of *VE* (1888), scholars are nearly unanimous⁵ in refusing to identify 2. with 3., the author of *VI* with the pupil of Arethas and the libeller of St. Euthymius. De Boor's argument,⁶ in briefest outline, runs like this: the Nicetas of *VE* attacked Euthymius for his "dispensation" of Leo VI's fourth marriage. Therefore, he was *anti* the Ignatian Euthymius and *pro* the Photian Nicholas Mysticus. Therefore, he is unlikely to be the author of *VI*, who is demonstrably *anti* Photius and *pro* Ignatius. Therefore 2. and 3. are different persons.

A chronological obstacle to the identification is added, though not by De Boor. The author of *VI*, it is generally stated, died ca. 890, if not ca. 880. Krumbacher⁷ gives both dates. Most scholars repeat at least the later date (890); although Loparev⁸ admits that it is a mere guess. Obviously, if 2. died in or about 890, he cannot be 3., who is alive in 910; still less can he be 1., who, according to Vogt, is writing as late as ca. 963. Where then do these dates of 880/90 come from? So far as I can discover, 880 first appears in E. Dronke's preface to Nicetas' *Paraphrasis carminum arcanorum S. Gregorii Naz.* (1840), where we find: *Hoc constat eum [Nicetam] mortem obiisse post annum 880: nam irruptionem illis temporibus a Saracenis in Siciliam factam atque eversionem Syracusarum ipse narrat in Vita Ignatii patriarchae Cplitani.*⁹ This is true enough, so far as it goes. But there is no evidence at all to show that the author of *VI* died immediately, or ten years, after the disaster recorded. In point of fact, at the time of its occurrence he was probably not yet born.

⁵ The scholars include (in alphabetical order) Beck, Costa-Louillet, Dvornik, Krumbacher, Loparev, Moravcsik, Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Popov, Vasil'evskij and Vogt: a formidable array. It is unnecessary to cite their works in detail here, since I believe their thesis to be wrong. They will be cited *infra*, as occasion offers.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 194–196.

⁷ *GBL*², pp. 167, 679.

⁸ *Izvestija*, 13, p. 171: *konechno gadatel'no.*

⁹ *MPG*, XXXVIII, cols. 681–682.

But to return to De Boor's main argument: this was justifiable inference at the time it was written, for the facts of the case were not yet known. But since the publication of *Eight Letters of Arethas*¹⁰ (hereafter referred to as *EL*) in 1956, there can be no excuse for maintaining it now. In brief, the Nicetas of *VE* wrote his libel on St. Euthymius and the Emperor Leo without in any way upholding the cause of Photius or identifying himself with Nicholas Mysticus. In his eyes, the conduct of both Church parties, Photian-Nicholaan and Ignatian-Euthymian, over the Emperor Leo's fourth marriage was equally depraved and contemptible. And, indeed, in a celebrated passage of *VI*,¹¹ to which we must return, he stigmatises the whole series of Photius' patriarchal successors as equally time-serving, grasping, and odious. He had been an ardent disciple of Arethas when Arethas was opposing the fourth marriage (April 906–February 907); but when, thereafter, Arethas followed the Euthymians in their great betrayal, Nicetas washed his hands of the whole pack of them, Photians and Ignatians alike.

Having got rid of a Nicetas who died ca. 890, and of reasons supposedly inhibiting the Nicetas of *VE* from writing *VI*, we can see that 2. and 3. may easily be—as in fact they are—identical. One more clearance of accretion must be made, before we begin to reconstruct the true, indivisible Nicetas: that is, removal of his episcopal pretensions. Vogt¹² saw that the title "Bishop of Dadybra," as applied to Nicetas, is a laughable error. Among the headings of Nicetas' works enumerated by Loparev¹³ we find, Νικήτα τοῦ Παφλαγόνος καὶ Δαδύβρου, δούλου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ φιλοσόφου. Originally, this stood as Νικήτα τοῦ Παφλαγόνος (τοῦ) καὶ Δᾶδ (sc. David). An ingenious scribe, knowing that the see of Dadybra was a suffragan of Gangra, in Paphlagonia, at once appointed Nicetas to this see, and he appears thereafter as ἐπίσκοπος Δαδύβρων. The error was made easier, and more venial,

¹⁰ R. J. H. Jenkins, Basil Laourdas, "Eight Letters of Arethas on the Fourth Marriage of Leo the Wise," *Hellenika*, 14 (1956), pp. 293–372.

¹¹ Col. 573 C.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 174.

by the fact that there had been a Nicetas, bishop of Dadybra, who signed the Acts of the Seventh Council in 787.¹⁴ Nor can Nicetas have been a bishop or archbishop of Paphlagonia, as some have supposed, since, as Allatius¹⁵ puts it, *episcopatus Paphlagoniae nullus appetet*.

We can now proceed to summarize what is known, or can be deduced, of the biography of Nicetas-David Paphlago.¹⁶ Like his uncle Paul the Sacellarius,¹⁷ he hailed from Paphlagonia, and was born not earlier than ca. 885.¹⁸ He came to Constantinople, and studied under the great scholar Arethas,¹⁹ Archbishop of Caesarea since ca. 903. He was the intimate friend of Arethas during the most critical months of the Tetragamy scandal,²⁰ that is, from the summer of 906 to the spring of 907; and, under Arethas' influence, he espoused with ardour the cause of the "anti-marriage" party, of which Arethas himself was at that time the chief spokesman.²¹ The Court party, supported, whether through conviction or blackmail, by the Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus, made every effort between May and December 906 to overcome Arethas' intransigence; and they tried repeatedly, both through Nicetas' uncle Paul²² and through the Patriarch Nicholas²³ himself, to detach his brilliant young pupil from Arethas' side. It was to no purpose. Nicetas, in a letter to his uncle which is

¹⁴ Mansi, 13, col. 369 D; cf. col. 391 A.

¹⁵ MPG, CV, cols. 9–10.

¹⁶ The "biography" concocted by Loparev, as Vogt (*op. cit.*, p. 6, note 1) points out, is almost wholly imaginary.

¹⁷ VE (ed. by Karlin-Hayter), 110/14–16: cf. *ibid.*, pp. 170–171; *Neos Hellenomnemon*, 19 (1925), pp. 188–191.

¹⁸ Perhaps at Amastris, which, at MPG, CV, col. 421 C–D, he calls τῆς οἰκουμένης δόλιγον δῆμον. If Nicetas was still Arethas' pupil in 906, he is not likely to have been much over 20; but if he was already setting up as a teacher himself, he will not, however brilliant, have been less. Again, if, as Vogt says, he was still writing as late as 963, it will not do to make him much beyond 80 at the time. It seems clear that he was born after the death of Ignatius (877): cf. VI, col. 489 A.

¹⁹ VE (ed. by Karlin-Hayter), 114/11–12.

²⁰ See EL, *passim*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Neos Hellenomnemon, 19 (1925), pp. 188–191.

²³ Ibid., 8 (1911), pp. 301–306.

extant,²⁴ writes of his master with all the enthusiasm of ardent youth. He is bound indissolubly to his beloved, his adored Arethas. He has known him long, and chosen him as the pattern of virtue. He owes everything to him. Arethas has instructed him, formed his mind, led him to truth, moulded his intellect, taught him wisdom and courage. But best of all is his master's goodness. Arethas is full of all grace, piety, religion, intelligence, quickness, frankness—in a word, a perfect gentleman. How can Nicetas desert him?

One would hardly have thought the bitter and rancorous Arethas capable of arousing this degree of *Schwärmerei* in a pupil, however young and devoted to scholarship. But such is the fact. Nicetas was in every way guided by his master until the betrayal of 907: and he gives ample proof, both in one of his letters and, as we shall see,²⁵ in VI, of close familiarity with Arethas' polemical tracts on the Tetragamy scandal.

Everyone knows the outcome. The crisis came in February 907. The Patriarch Nicholas, who, despite all his efforts, had failed to reconcile the party of Euthymius and Arethas to the Emperor's fourth marriage, was dismissed. And in his place Euthymius, leader of the very party which had hitherto condemned the marriage out of hand, now quietly accepted the patriarchate and "dispensed" the marriage. Arethas followed suit.²⁶ Only the miserable Nicetas was left out in the cold.

The blow was stunning. Small wonder that he "despised all the things of this world," and betook himself to "philosophise," that is, to prepare for the life to come,²⁷ in a hermitage near Media. We have seen how, some months later, he was arrested as a spy, and would have been punished severely for his libel on the Patriarch Euthymius and the Emperor Leo, but for the Patriarch's intercession. Arethas, in urging Nicetas' condemnation and punishment, committed his final betrayal of one who had loved and

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, *supra* (note 22), p. 189.

²⁵ Cf. also DOP, 16 (1962), pp. 231–232.

²⁶ VE (ed. by Karlin-Hayter), 108/20ff.

²⁷ See Karlin-Hayter's comment at VE, p. 111, note 1; and Psellus, *Chronographie* (ed. by Renauld), 1, p. 73.

trusted him; but, as we shall see, he had some excuse for his resentment.

Nicetas withdrew to the monastery of Agathos, where he remained two years. It was probably here that he became the monk David.²⁸ We have thus accounted for his genuine names and titles: "rhetor" as a teacher; "philosopher" as intellectual ascetic; "David," "slave of Christ," and "holy man" as a monk. He left the monastery in 910, at the age of about 25. The rest of his long life is known to us only from his voluminous writings.

And now there remain the questions of when and why did he write the *Life* of St. Ignatius? To begin with the date: in *EL* (p. 346) I ventured the opinion that Nicetas wrote *VI* during the years 908–10, at the monastery of Agathos. This I believe to be nearly right, but not quite so. Let us try to be more precise.

De Boor,²⁹ who is followed by many, states that *VI* was written "höchst wahrscheinlich zwischen a. 880 und a. 886." Obviously, if the author died *ca.* 890, it must have been written before that date. But in fact both dates, 880–6 and 890, are pure assumption, and, as it proves, false assumption. The reasoning is that the latest historical events recorded in *VI* must be *recent* events at the time of composition. There is no ground for this hypothesis. Indeed, there are very good reasons for believing it to be mistaken. In the first place, *VI* (col. 541 A–B) describes the attempt of contemporary Photians to claim for their hero the "honour of sainthood" (*δόξαν ἀγιωσύνης*). This can only mean that Photius is now dead. The date of his death is uncertain. It could be February 6, 893, or it could be later; but it cannot be before 893.³⁰ Internal evidence can take us further.

²⁸ Cf. *VI*, col. 493 D, Νικήτας δὲ καὶ Ἰγνάτιος, where the Saint's "worldly" name comes first, and his monastic name second. Similarly, with Νικήτας δὲ καὶ Δασίδ. Loparev (*op. cit.*, p. 165), with singular perverseness, reverses the order.

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 195.

³⁰ I need not discuss the point at length here; for conflicting views on it, see N. Popov, *Imperator Lev VI Mudrij* (Moscow, 1892), pp. 46–47, and J. Hergenröther, *Photius*, II, pp. 713–714. Photius seems to have been canonised before 959, if that is the date of MS "H" of the Typicon of the Great Church (ed. by Mateos, *Or. Chr. Anal.*, 165 [Rome, 1962], pp. xviii–xix, 228/6).

Ignatius, says Nicetas (col. 489 A), appeared later in time than the stalwarts of old, but still "before this generation of ours"; and again (col. 489 B), since his death (in 877), the cloud of ignorance about him has grown thick during many years (ἴκανοῖς χρόνοις). The number of years implied by *ἴκανοῖς* is of course debatable; but a generation (*γενεά*), as Loparev³¹ reminds us, is thirty years, and thirty years on from 877 is 907. Again, at col. 573 B. the loss of Syracuse (878) is recorded, and then the author goes on: "and every island, and every city and country, continues to be ravaged and destroyed even down to this day (μέχρι καὶ τήμερον), for no prayer of those who claim to be priests can win God's favour, but—as it is written—we are in truth become sheep for whom there is no shepherd. For the mischief has become inveterate (*χρονίσασα... ἡ κακία*), and is confirmed by numerous examples, and is a law unto the lawless, and the habit of unrighteousness is—as it were—a second nature to the scoffers, and draws down all the wrath of God." The use of *μέχρι καὶ τήμερον*, and even more of *χρονίσασα*, surely implies several years since 878.

But of all such hints, that found at col. 573 C is the most significant: "But to recount each one of the injuries and crimes of Photius himself, the first in the line of hypocrites, and of all his successors one after the other (καὶ πάντων καθεξῆς τῶν αὐτοῦ διαδόχων), who have shared his lust for power, is the task of a historian, and unsuitable for a treatise of the present scope."³² "All Photius' successors, one after the other," must imply at least three patriarchs since his second deposition in 886, namely, Stephen, Antony, and Nicholas. I believe that it implies one more, Euthymius.

The consensus of the internal evidence is, then, that the composition of *VI* is datable

³¹ *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 19 (1912), p. 145; but Loparev thinks that the "generation" is from Ignatius' birth (798), and will, therefore, have Nicetas born *ca.* 828. This is a good fifty years too early.

³² Col. 573 C. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (*Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 6 [1899], pp. 17–20), silly as his article is, lays proper emphasis on the passage, as Fr. Yared and Popov (*op. cit.*, p. 161, note 5) had done before him. Vasil'evskij's answer to Pap.-Ker., on this point at least, is decidedly weak (*Viz. Vrem.*, tom. cit., pp. 44–45).

about thirty years or so after the Saint's death, that is, in the patriarchate of Nicholas (901–907), or of Euthymius (907–912). This conclusion is fully confirmed by detailed consideration of VI, cols. 505 D (ὅ μὲν οὖν κύριος ἡμῶν κτλ.) to 508 D (τῶν εὐσεβούντων ἀντερέιν). Nicetas has been describing the quarrel between Bardas and Ignatius, followed by the latter's deposition on a trumped-up charge of high treason. He then proceeds in this manner:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God of true Father, Who both, as God before all ages, knows all things before their coming to birth, and also, when He became man for us, foreknew all things in His deified mind, saith: "It is needful that scandals should come; but woe unto him through whom scandal cometh!" Now, for all the heresies which, since the presence of His incarnate Divinity even unto this present day, have crept in to defile the Churches, the heresiarchs themselves, as authors of the scandals, are deservedly the first to share in their miseries also; and I suppose that, equally with the famous heretics of olden days, those who have played the villain in this our generation, as authors of ten thousand scandals to the world, *will* be the objects (*λήψονται*) of the heavenly wrath. For not because they seem to confess God in 'orthodox' (as they claim) doctrine and innumerable diatribes, shall they merely on this account be justified; no! rather because in their deeds (according to the words of Sacred Scripture) they denied Him, and became impure and disobedient, and unapproved towards every good work, for this shall they be condemned. And not because they put on a semblance of piety, and some form and empty fiction of regard for religion in all their doings and traffickings, so that they may be justified before men, shall they on this account be found righteous before Him Who surveys and weighs our secrets; no! rather because they deserted the stronghold of piety and life according to the Gospel, and sold themselves for love of self and money and all kinds of pleasure and power, and

indulged in all kinds of unrighteousness, perjuries, broken promises, and crimes and injuries against the innocent, and dissolved and confounded all ecclesiastical order; because by their manifold irregularities and illegalities they profaned the divine substance and name of Holy Church, so that the mystery of religion (one might almost say) runs the risk of being understood as mere verbiage, and no longer as reality and truth; for these reasons they shall receive God's most righteous condemnation.

Of all these evils the primordial cause and root is, plainly, the primordial slayer of man, who, a renegade from goodness, and become the creator of all vice, doth not cease, even unto now, to belch his peculiar venom upon those who, in every generation, are prone to receive it. And so much the more profuse is he of his viciousness as he comes upon those who are more fit to serve his purpose. Sometimes God allows to govern, and to be great in worldly authority, men through whom (as Divine Scripture has it) 'the thoughts of many hearts may be manifest': so that the grain may be divided from the chaff, and the righteous, by their persecutions, may be refined as gold in the crucible, and hoarded up in the heavenly treasures; and all that is unapproved and unworthy of the Kingdom of God may be cast aside like dross. I do not think any religious man will disagree with this.

There is much in this truly remarkable outburst of Nicetas that calls for careful scrutiny. To begin with, it bears every mark of being an excursus: indeed, the author admits that it is, by remarking, at its close: "But let us see what the sequel was in the case of the holy Ignatius *also*": or, in other words, the passage is not of particular reference to Ignatius' story, but refers to analogous situations, or an analogous situation.

Second, the passage refers to a situation prevalent *at the time of writing*: τὰς... μέχρι τῶν δεῦρο παρεισφθαρείσας αἱρέσεις, and οἱ κατὰ ταύτην πονηρευσάμενοι γενεάν (col. 508 A). It cannot therefore refer to events in

the life of St. Ignatius, which are expressly stated to have occurred πρὸ τῆς καὶ ήμᾶς ταύτης... γενεᾶς (col. 489 A).

Third, the reference to "heresies" (*σιρέσεις*) is highly instructive. In the quarrel between Bardas and Ignatius in 856–8, no question of heresy was involved. Bardas was a man who chose to live in incest with his daughter-in-law, or at all events was widely believed to be doing so. But he was not a heretic, in any sense of the word. Even the ostensible reason for Ignatius' deposition was a political charge of treason, and did not involve his accusers in heresy. However, in the Tetragamy scandal of 906–7, the opposition party, headed by Arethas, maintained that Leo VI's fourth marriage *did* involve heresy. Arethas³³ states (in 906) that the Emperor's friends are disseminating the opinion that "there is nothing in all this [fourth marriage] to excite any scandal whatever, or to give any pretext for withdrawal from their Church: *for this is no heresy, they say* (οὐδὲ γάρ αἱρεσίς τοῦτο, φησί), nothing which calls for an irremediable breach in the body of the faithful; and to desert the Court on such grounds as these, and by personal example to divide others into a party of opposition, is absurd." But, continues Arethas, heresy *is* involved in the present evil, as is witnessed by the canonical fixation of penalties.

Fourth, once the connection of our passage with the second of Arethas' *Eight Letters* is seen, the inspiration of the former is unmistakable. The whole section from Οὐ γάρ ὅτι δόγμασιν ὄρθοις (*VI*, col. 508 A) down to the end is a conscious paraphrase of paragraph 4 in Arethas' second Letter,³⁴ where Arethas castigates the Court party for defiling purity of faith by impure works. Indeed, even the vocabulary is here and there the same in both: cf. *VI*, col. 508 A, δόγμασιν ὄρθοις with Arethas' τὴν ἐν δόγμασιν ὄρθοτητα (*EL*, 300/37); and *VI*, *ibid.*, τοῖς ἔργοις βδελυκτοῖ with τῇ βδελυρίᾳ τῶν

³³ *EL*, p. 299/12–28. For "heresy" in the parallel cases of Constantine VI and Constantine IX, see passages from Theodore Studita and Cerularius given by A. Michel, *Humbert und Kerullarios*, II (Paderborn, 1930), p. 240; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 171–175, and *id.*, *Die Kaisermacht in der Ostkirche* (Darmstadt, 1959), p. 143.

³⁴ *EL*, pp. 300–301.

ἔργων (*EL*, 301/8). Now, I have pointed out elsewhere³⁵ that Nicetas betrays an intimate knowledge of Arethas' Letters in one of his own, edited by Lambros³⁶: and this, in view of the close association of the two men until 907, is natural enough. We cannot doubt that at *VI*, col. 508, Nicetas is copying his one-time master. The implication of this will soon appear. For the present, it is enough to state that, since the second Letter of Arethas was written in the latter part of 906, then *VI*, or at least this part of it, must have been written *after* that date.

But we have still not quite finished with Nicetas' outburst. *VE*³⁷ tells us that when Nicetas appeared a second time as a prisoner before the Emperor, it had been discovered that he had written "a very hostile and bitter tract [λόγος or σύγγραμμα]" against the arch-priest [Euthymius] and the Emperor [Leo] himself." Can this σύγγραμμα have been very different from the passage here in question? Is it not possible, even probable, that *this is* (in substance) *the very passage* produced and read in evidence at Nicetas' trial? *VE* states that the diatribe was against Patriarch and Emperor, in that order, and this is in fact the order of our passage; while to describe it as "very hostile and bitter" would seem to be an understatement. The hierarchy is first condemned, in the very terms formerly applied by Arethas to Nicholas Mysticus when the latter was still a supporter of the fourth marriage: the same accusations of time-serving and hypocrisy are made. As for the castigation of Leo (Συγχωροῦνται δὲ πολλάκις κρατεῖν κτλ.), it is not strange that it should have put that choleric Emperor beside himself with rage. To be told that he was Satan's instrument, and that he was so absolutely evil that God's only reason for "allowing" him to rule (κρατεῖν) was in order that his tyranny might serve as a touchstone to separate the virtuous from the depraved—what insults could be greater than these? Moreover, on this hypothesis, the anger and vindictiveness of Arethas towards his former pupil are easily explained. Having stood by to hear himself and his new friends denounced in the very

³⁵ *DOP*, 16 (1962), pp. 231–232.

³⁶ *Neos Hellenomnemon*, 21 (1927), pp. 7–14.

³⁷ (Ed. by Karlin-Hayter), 112/9–11.

arguments and phrases coined by himself, he was naturally exasperated; and if we must condemn as ungenerous his demand for full punishment on Nicetas, we must also grant that he was under severe provocation.

If this is allowed, it brings us very close to an accurate date for the composition of *VI*. At least a part of it was composed between February 907 and the end of the year; though it is probable that its final form was elaborated during the following two years of quiet and converse with Ignatian monks in the Agathos monastery.

All this puts a different complexion on the purpose of *VI* as a whole. It has hitherto been regarded, with good reason, as primarily an anti-Photian document, and it was later appended to the Anti-Photian Collection.³⁸ As is well known, the later historian Skylitzes so regarded it.³⁹ But it now appears that anti-Photianism was a secondary consideration with Nicetas Paphlago, though a very real one, for all that: since Photius had been the master of his once adored but now detested Arethas. If Nicetas had still been the friend and pupil of Arethas after, as before, February 907, he could not have written his attack on Photius in *VI*. But Nicetas' main emotional preoccupation at the time of writing was

the Tetragamy struggle of 906–7, in which he had been so cruelly betrayed.⁴⁰ Casting about for a theme which should furnish an example of courage and constancy in such matters, he very naturally pitched on the story of Ignatius. Like Nicholas, Euthymius, and Arethas, Ignatius had been faced with the problem of scandalous sexual laxity in the imperial house; but, unlike them, he had stood firm against it, and had suffered deposition, insult, and torture in defense of his principles. The Emperor Leo and his Patriarch were quite sharp enough to see at whom Nicetas was aiming in the passage translated and explained above. It is much to the credit of the truly good and humane Euthymius that he, though just as much belabored by Nicetas as was the Emperor himself, could see the author's point, sympathize with his position, secure his liberty, and grant him refuge.

The conclusion, then, would seem to be that Nicetas-David Paphlago, rhetor, didaskalos, "philosopher," and monk (but at no time bishop of Dadybra), was one man, whether he appears as the author of *encomia*, or of *VI*, or in the pages of *VE. Personae non sunt multiplicandae sine necessitate*. Here no *necessitas* exists.

³⁸ F. Dvornik, *The Photian Schism* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 271–275.

³⁹ Cedrenus (Bonn ed.) I, 4/7, 5/2.

⁴⁰ Cf. *VI*, col. 573 C, which contains a clear reference to the Tetragamy scandal in the word ἐπιδυπλας : see *DOP*, 16 (1962), p. 233.